R. Thouret de Voltaire

THE ORPHAN of CHINA.

A

TRAGEDY.

Translated from the FRENCH of

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

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M. DCC. LVI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

DAVID GARRICK, Eſq;

SIR,

THE Story of *Voltaire*'s ORPHAN *of* CHINA, is ſo very affecting, and ſome of the characters ſo ſtrongly marked, that I cannot help taking this method of recommending it to your notice. A Play built on the ſame Fable, could not fail of being well received on our Stage. The following Tranſlation, lame as it may appear, would bid fair for as many admirers as moſt of our modern Tragedies, if ZAMTI was repreſented by Mr. *Garrick*, and IDAME by Mrs. *Cibber*, or Mrs. *Pritchard*: for either of thoſe Performers would appear to advantage in that character. You will ſmile perhaps at this laſt inſinuation;

but I can aſſure you, I am the moſt diſintereſted of any who have offered their Plays to you, ſince I ſhall not pretend to lay any claim to the Benefit of Third Nights.

BUT if you ſeriouſly intended to bring on a Tragedy founded on this Story, ſome few alterations in the Plan might be made, which, I think, would render it ſtill more excellent. The two alarming Scenes in the Firſt and Laſt Act could, indeed, admit of no improvement; and are convincing proofs of the ſenſe our Author muſt entertain of *Shakeſpear*'s excellencies, and how much he has profited by a judicious imitation of his manner, notwithſtanding the diſreſpect with which he has more than once mentioned that great Maſter of the Drama. It appears to me, that the Plot would be more artfully conducted, if the audience were not ſo ſoon apprized that IDAME is the perſon for whom GENGIS formerly entertained an unſucceſsful paſſion.

THIS, I think, will be evident to every one, who will read over the Scene between GENGIS and OCTAR, in the Second Act, and for a moment ſuppoſe to himſelf, that he has not already

already been let into the ſecret: after which let him conſider whether the natural amazement of GENGIS, on ſeeing IDAME, at the opening of the Third Act, would not have been doubly intereſting, if the diſcovery had by that means been firſt made to the ſpectator. Beſides this alteration, I cannot help thinking that the account given by OSMAN, at the latter part of the Second Act, of the behaviour of ZAMTI and IDAME, might be very ſucceſsfully thrown into action, and would more affectingly engage the attention of the audience, than a long narration which would appear the more tedious, as it would moſt probably be put into the mouth of an inferior player. The character of GENGIS might alſo be heightened with ſome pathetick touches, which would not only be more natural, but would alſo make him leſs reſemble one of thoſe angry ſtrutting kings, ſo frequent in our Plays, and which have ſo long made Majeſty appear ridiculous on the *Engliſh* Stage.

THESE, and ſome few other alterations, might perhaps be found expedient, if you ſhould think proper to naturalize this *French* performance. I hope you will on no account deprive

prive the Public of ſo exquiſite an entertainment, ſince *Voltaire*'s Original muſt fall into very bad hands indeed, if they contrive to make it half ſo inſipid as any new Tragedies lately exhibited, *Barbaroſſa* excepted. I am,

SIR,

Your Admirer,

and humble Servant,

The TRANSLATOR.

TO

TO THE

LORD MARSHAL

DUKE of *RICHELIEU*,

PEER of *FRANCE*,

First Gentleman of the KING's Chamber, Commandant in *Languedoc*, one of the Forty of the Academy.

My LORD,

I WOULD fain preſent you with beautiful marble like the *Genoeſe*, and I have only *Chineſe* figures to offer you. This little Work does not ſeem made for you. There is no hero in this piece, who has reconciled all opinions by the charms of his genius, or who has ſupported a falling republick, or who has attempted to overthrow an *Engliſh*

liſh column with four cannons *. I am more aware than any body of the trifle that I offer you: but all muſt be forgiven to an attachment of forty years. It will be ſaid, perhaps, that at the foot of the *Alps*, and in the midſt of eternal ſnows, whither I am retired, and where I ought to be merely a philoſopher, I have yielded to the vanity of publiſhing to the world, that the moſt eminent perſon on the banks of the *Seine* has never forgot me: yet I have only conſulted my own heart; that alone directs me; that has always inſpired my words and actions; it deceives itſelf ſometimes, you know; but not after proofs of ſo long ſtanding. Let it then be known, if this weak Tragedy can laſt any time after me, that its Author was not indifferent to you; let it be known, that if your Uncle founded the polite Arts in *France*, you have ſupported them in their decline.

THE idea of this Tragedy was firſt conceived ſome time ago on reading *The Orphan of Tchao*, a *Chineſe* Tragedy, tranſlated by Father *Brémare*, which may be found in the Collection publiſhed by Father *Du Halde*. This *Chineſe* piece was compoſed

* At the battle of *Fontenoy*, the *Engliſh* army was drawn up in a column, divided into three parts, which had made its way againſt all oppoſition, and remained maſters of the field. Marſhal SAXE himſelf had given orders to prepare for a retreat, when by the advice of the Duke of RICHELIEU, four cannons were advanced againſt the Body of the *Engliſh* Forces, which were the chief means of their being routed, and the victory falling on the ſide of the *French:* To which circumſtance the Dedicator here alludes.

poſed in the fourteenth Century, within the very Dynaſty of GENGIS-KAN. It is a new proof that the victorious *Tartars* did not change the manners of the nation vanquiſhed; they protected all the Arts eſtabliſhed in *China*; they adopted all its Laws.

THIS is a ſtriking inſtance of the natural ſuperiority of reaſon and genius over blind and barbarous force: and the *Tartars* have twice afforded this example. For when they had again made a conqueſt of this great Empire at the beginning of the laſt century, they ſubmitted a ſecond time to the wiſdom of the nation they had ſubdued: and the two people have formed but one nation, governed by the moſt ancient laws in the world: a ſtriking event, which has been the main ſcope of my work.

THE *Chineſe* Tragedy called *The Orphan*, is taken from a large Collection of Dramatick Pieces of that nation. They cultivated above three thouſand years ago that art, found out a little time after by the *Grecians*, of drawing living portraits of the actions of men, and of eſtabliſhing thoſe ſchools of morality, where virtue is inculcated by action and dialogue. Dramatick Poetry was for a long time in repute, only in the vaſt country of *China*, ſeparated from, and unknown to the reſt of the world, and in the one town of *Athens*. *Rome*

did not cultivate it till at the end of four hundred years after. If you look for it among the *Perſians*, among the *Indians*, who paſs for people of invention, you will not find it; it never came to them. *Aſia* contented itſelf with the Fables of *Pilpay* and *Lokman*, which include the whole of morality, and which inſtruct by allegory all nations and all ages.

One would imagine, that after having made animals talk, there remained but one ſtep to make men converſe, to bring them on the ſtage, and to form the Dramatick Art: yet theſe ingenious people never once thought of it. One may infer from hence, that the *Chineſe*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans* are the only ancient people, who had a true notion of ſociety. Nothing, in effect, makes men more ſociable, more ſoftens their manners, brings their reaſon to greater perfection, than aſſembling them to taſte together the pure pleaſures of the ſoul. Thus we ſee that ſcarce had *Peter the Great* poliſhed *Ruſſia*, and built *Peterſbourg*, than Theatres were eſtabliſhed. *Germany*, the more it has improved, the more it has adopted public ſpectacles. The few countries, where they have not been received within the laſt century, have not been placed in the rank of civilized nations.

THE *Orphan of Tchao* is a precious monument, which ſerves better to ſhew us the genius of *China* than all the relations ever made, or that ever can be made of that vaſt Empire. It is true, that that piece is quite barbarous, in compariſon of the correct Works of our time; but at the ſame time it is an abſolute maſter-piece, if we compare it to thoſe of ours written in the fourteenth century. Certainlyour * *Troubdours*, our *Bazoche*, our *Societé des enfans ſans ſouci*, and our *Mére ſotte*, are infinitely below the *Chineſe* Author. It muſt alſo be obſerved, that that piece is written in the language of the *Mandarins*, which is not at all changed, and that we ſcarce underſtand the language ſpoken in the times of *Lewis the Twelfth*, and *Charles the Eighth*.

THE *Orphan of Tchao* can only be compared to the *Engliſh* and *Spaniſh* Tragedies of the ſeventeenth century, which pleaſe even now beyond the *Pyrenees*, and beyond the ſea. The action of the *Chineſe* Piece laſts twenty-five years, as in the monſtrous Dramas of *Shakeſpear* and *Lopez de Vega*, which they have named Tragedies: it is a heap of incredible events. The enemy of the houſe of *Tchao* firſt attempts to deſtroy the chief of it, by letting looſe on him a huge maſtiff, which

* Names of *French* Plays, and *French* Authors.

is ſuppoſed to be endowed with the inſtinct of diſcovering criminals, as *Jacques Aimar* among us diſcovered robbers by his wand. Then he ſuppoſes an order of the Emperor, and ſends to his enemy *Tchao* a rope, a bowl of poiſon, and a poignard. *Tchao* ſings, according to the cuſtom, and cuts his own throat, in vertue of that obedience due of right divine from all mankind to the Emperor of *China*. The perſecutor deſtroys three hundred perſons of the houſe of *Tchao*. The Princeſs Dowager then lays in of the *Orphan*. They convey away the infant from the fury of him who has extirpated his whole family, and who would yet murder in his cradle the only one remaining. This deſtroyer iſſues orders to murder all the infants in the villages round about, that the *Orphan* may be enveloped in the general deſtruction.

One ſeems reading *the thouſand and one nights* in action and ſcenes: but notwithſtanding the incredibility, it is ſtill intereſting; and in ſpite of the heap of incidents, the whole is remarkably perſpicuous. Theſe have been the two grand excellencies in all ages and all nations; and theſe excellencies are wanting in many of our modern pieces. It is true, the *Chineſe* piece has no other beauties: unity of time and action, opening of ſentiments, painting of manners, eloquence, argument, paſſion, are all wanting; and yet, as I have

have already ſaid, the work is ſuperior to any of our own of the ſame date.

YET the *Chineſe*, who in the fourteenth century, and ſo long before, compoſed better Dramatick Poems than all the *Europeans*, have always remained in the mere infancy of the art, while by time and diligence our Nation has produced about a dozen pieces; which, if they are not perfect, are yet infinitely beyond any thing that all the reſt of the world has produced in that kind. The *Chineſe*, like the other *Aſiaticks*, have ſtopt at the firſt elements of Poetry, Eloquence, Phyſicks, Aſtronomy, Painting, known by them ſo long before us. They begun all things ſo much ſooner than all other people, never afterwards to make any progreſs in them. They have reſembled the ancient *Ægyptians*, who having firſt inſtructed the *Grecians*, were afterwards incapable of being their diſciples.

THESE *Chineſe*, to whom we have made voyages among ſo many dangers, theſe people of whom we have with ſo much difficulty obtained leave to carry them the money of *Europe*, and to come and inſtruct them, are yet ignorant that we are their ſuperiors: they are not enough advanced, to dare only to try to imitate us. We have gone into their hiſtory for ſubjects of Tragedy, and they are ignorant that we have an hiſtory.

THE famous Abbé *Metaſtaſio* has taken for the ſubject of one of his Dramatick Poems nearly the ſame ſubject with myſelf; that is to ſay, an *Orphan* eſcaped from the ſlaughter of his family; and he has carried that adventure back to a Dynaſty which reigned nine hundred years before our Æra.

THE *Chineſe* Tragedy of the *Orphan of Tchao*, is quite another ſubject. I again have choſe a ſubject quite different from the two others, and which only reſembles them in name. I have fix'd at the grand epocha of *Gengis-Kan*, and have endeavoured to paint the manners of the *Tartars* and of the *Chineſe*. Adventures the moſt intereſting are nothing, unleſs they paint the manners; and that painting, which is one of the great ſecrets of the Art, is alſo a mere frivolous amuſement, unleſs it inſpires virtue.

I MAY venture to ſay, that from the *Henriade* down to *Zara*, and quite down to this *Chineſe* piece, good or bad, ſuch has always been the principle that has inſpired me; and that in the hiſtory of the Age of *Lewis* the fourteenth, I have celebrated my King and my Country without flattering either one or the other. It is in ſuch a labour that I have conſumed more than forty years. But obſerve the words of a *Chineſe* author, tranſlated into *Spaniſh* by the celebrated *Navaretto*.

" If you compoſe any work, ſhew it only to " your friends; dread the publick and your fel- " lows; for they will falſify and empoiſon that " which you have done, and impute to you that " which you have not done. Calumny, who has " a hundred trumpets, ſhall ſound them all to de- " ſtroy you, while Truth, who is mute, ſhall reſt " with you. The famous *Ming* was accuſed of " having thought irreverently of *Tien* and *Li*, and " of the Emperor *Vang*. They found the old " man dying, who had juſt finiſhed the panegyric " of *Vang*, and a hymn to *Tien* and *Li*," &c.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

GENGIS-KAN, Emperor of the *Tartars*.

OCTAR, } Officers of the *Tartars*.
OSMAN, }

ZAMTI, *Mandarine* and Prieſt.

IDAME, Wife to *Zamti*.

ASSELI, Friend to *Idame*.

ETAN, Friend to *Zamti*.

The SCENE *is in a Palace of the* Mandarines, *joining to the Imperial Palace, in the City of* Cambalu, *now* Pekin.

THE ORPHAN of CHINA.

A TRAGEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

IDAME, ASSELI.

IDAME.

CAN there, in this ſad day of deſolation,
In this dire hour of carnage and deſtruction,
When ev'n this palace, open to the *Tartars*,
Falls with the world beneath barbarian hands,
Can there, amid this heap of publick horrors,
Remain for me freſh cauſe of private woe?

ASSELI.

Ah! who, alas! among the common loſs,
Feel not the preſſure of their own misfortunes?
Who ſends not up to heav'n her feeble cries
To ſave a ſon, a father, or a huſband?
Within this pale, ſtill ſtranger to the foe,
Whither the King withdrew from publick view
The weak defenceleſs miniſters of peace;

Th' interpreters of law, the holy prieſts,
Decrepit age, and cradled infancy,
And we the trembling band of fearful women,
Whom cruel ſlaughter yet has left untouch'd,
Know not, alas! to what enormous lengths
The haughty victor may extend his rage.
We hear the thunder roll, and tempeſts roar:
The ſtorm hangs o'er us, and we dread its fall.

IDAME.

O fortune! O thou more than earthly pow'r!——
Know'ſt thou, my ASSELI, beneath what hand
Once-pow'rful *Cathay*'s bleeding empire groans,
The hand, that thus oppreſſes all the world?

ASSELI.

They call the cruel tyrant King of Kings:
Fierce GENGIS-KAN, whoſe dread exploits in war
Have made proud *Aſia* one vaſt ſepulchre.
OCTAR his officer, to murder train'd,
With ſword and fire already ſeeks the palace,
And conquer'd *Cathay* to new maſters yields.
This city, ſometime ſovereign of the world,
Lies drown'd in blood; and all its hundred ſtreets,
Floating in gore, proclaim the diſmal tale.

IDAME.

Know'ſt thou, this tyrant of the ſubject earth,
This fell deſtroyer of our helpleſs ſtate,
This dread of kings, imbrued in royal blood,
Is a rough *Scythian*, bred to war and arms;
A warrior, wandering in thoſe ſavage deſarts,
Where angry heaven lours with endleſs ſtorms.
'Tis he, who mad for pow'r above his fellows,
Was hither driv'n by perſecution's rage,
And whom thou lately ſaw'ſt in this great city,

Begging

Begging protection at the palace gates.
This King of Kings, this victor's TEMUGIN.

ASSELI.

How! TEMUGIN! who paid his vows to thee!
That fugitive! whoſe homage and whoſe love
Appear'd an inſult to your angry parents!
Is't he, draws after him this train of kings,
He, whoſe bare name ſtrikes terror to mankind!

IDAME.

The ſame, my ASSELI; his haughty courage,
His future greatneſs ſhone upon his viſage.
All, I confeſs, ſeem'd poor and mean to him;
And even, while he begg'd our court's aſſiſtance,
Unknown, a fugitive, he ſeem'd commanding.
He lov'd me; and perhaps my fooliſh heart
Approv'd his love: perhaps it was my pride
To tame this lion ſhackled in my chains,
To our ſoft forms to bend his ſavage grandeur,
To poliſh with our virtues his rough ſoul,
And make him one day worthy to be rank'd
Among the number of our citizens.
He would have ſerv'd the ſtate he has deſtroy'd;
And He we ſcorn'd has brought on all our woes.
Thou know'ſt, the fierceneſs of our jealous people,
The ancient honours of our arts and laws,
Our holy faith, thrice ſanctified and pure,
And the long glories of a hundred ages,
All, all forbad, with one united voice,
A baſe alliance with the barb'rous nations.
A holier Hymen has engaged my vows,
And virtuous ZAMTI merits all my love.
Who would have thought, in thoſe bleſt hours of peace,
That a ſcorn'd *Scythian* thus ſhould lord it o'er us?

This, this alarms me; I refuſed his hand,
And am the wife and partner of another.
He comes in blood, the world at his command
To give him means of vengeance.— O ſtrange fate!
O heaven! can it be, that this great people
Should like baſe flocks of cattle ſent to ſlaughter,
Fall, without fight, beneath a *Scythian*'s ſword!

ASSELI.

The *Coreans*, it is ſaid, have troops aſſembled:
But we know nothing but by vague report,
And are abandon'd to the victor's rage.

IDAME.

O how uncertainty increaſes grief!
I know not where our miſeries extend;
Whether amid the palace of his fathers
The Emperor has refuge found, or help;
Whether the Queen by th' enemy is ſeiz'd;
Or, if of one or both the hour is come:
Too ſad reward, alas! of wedded love.
The hapleſs infant to our care conſign'd
Again excites my fear and my compaſſion.
My ZAMTI too with raſh ſtep treads the palace;
Haply, reſpect of his moſt holy office
May touch theſe ſavages. 'Tis ſaid, the ruffians,
Bred to the trade of death, have yet preſerv'd
Some notion of a GOD: ſo much ev'n nature,
In barb'rous climes, untaught and unimprov'd,
Proclaims to all, RELIGION and a GOD.
Yet, ah! I fondly dream of their reſpect,
I talk of hope, but am a ſlave to fear.
O miſery!

SCENE

SCENE II.

IDAME, ZAMTI, ASSELI.

IDAME.

O ſay, unhappy ZAMTI,
Is then our ſlavery, our woe determin'd?
Ah! what haſt thou beheld?

ZAMTI.

The height of horrors.
Our fortune's fixt, and *China* is no more.
Beneath the ſtranger ſword all falls. Ah! what avail'd
A life of virtue? Fair peace ſmil'd in vain;
In vain our laws gave pattern to the world;
Grey wiſdom dies by brutal violence.
I ſaw the ſavage troop of northern ruffians
Making their way in blood, o'er ſlaughter'd heaps,
Carrying the ſword and fire. In crowds they ſought
The ſacred manſion of our hapleſs Monarch.
He with majeſtick brow expected death,
And held within his arms his fainting Queen.
Thoſe of their children, whoſe increaſing valour
Began to grow with years, whoſe little arms
Could wield a ſword, were all already fall'n.
Round them clung thoſe, whoſe tender infancy
Had nought but cries and tears for their defence.
While they preſs'd round him, and embrac'd his knees,
I by a ſecret path approach'd the place,
And view'd with horror the unhappy father.
I ſaw thoſe fiends, thoſe monſters of the deſart,
Lifting the murd'rous ſteel againſt our King,
And thro' the palace drag with bloody hands
The father, children, and their dying mother.
While all was fury, havock, death, and plunder,

The wretched monarch turn'd on me his eyes,
And thus addreſs'd me in the ſacred tongue
Unknown to th' conqu'ring *Tartar* and the people,
O ſave at leaſt from death my youngeſt ſon!
Think, if I did not ſwear I would preſerve him,
O think, how loudly duty call'd upon me.
I felt my fainting ſpirits new revived;
Hither I flew. The bloody raviſhers
Stopt not my paſſage: whether hideous joy,
Intent on plunder, turn'd their eyes aſide;
Whether this badge of my moſt rev'rend office,
This ſymbol of the GOD that I adore,
Struck their fierce ſouls with awe; or Heav'n itſelf
Determin'd to preſerve this Royal Infant,
Athwart their watchful eyes dim miſts ſuffus'd,
Dazzled their ſight, and mollified their rage.

IDAME.

Yes, we will ſave him. Be this royal charge
With our dear child away convey'd, and bred.
Deſpair not, but with haſte prepare our flight:
Let ETAN have the care of our depart,
And fly tow'rds *Corea*; to the ocean ſide,
Where the ſea girds this mournful univerſe.
The earth has deſarts and wild ſavages.
Away then with theſe infants, while the foe
Invades not yet this ſanctified aſylum.
Come, time is precious, and complaint in vain.

ZAMTI.

Alas! has then the race of kings no refuge!—
The troops from *Corea* linger in their march.
Mean while deſtruction rages in our walls:
Seize we, if poſſible, th' auſpicious moment
To place in ſurety this our precious charge.

SCENE

SCENE III.

ZAMTI, IDAME, ASSELI, ETAN.

ZAMTI.

Why thus, my ETAN, frighted and amazed?

IDAME.

Fly, fly this place abandon'd to the *Scythian.*

ETAN.

You are obſerv'd, and flight impoſſible.
The pale's encircled by a cruel guard,
Forming around the frighted multitude
A dreadful fence thick-ſet with pikes and darts.
The conqu'ror ſpoke, and ſlavery heard his voice:
The people, motionleſs with fear and horror,
Sink in deſpair, now murder's reeking ſword
With impious rage has drank our Emp'ror's blood.

ZAMTI.

Is he then dead?

IDAME.

O heav'nly powers, the Emperor!

ETAN.

Words cannot paint the horrors of the ſcene.
His bleeding wife, their children torn and mangled——
O Gods! adored on earth! how ſhall I ſpeak it?
Their ſufferings only mov'd the victor's ſcorn,
While their poor ſubjects, fearful to complain,
Hung down thoſe eyes that ſpoke their grief too plainly.
The ſhameleſs ſoldiers on their coward knees
Reſign'd their arms; when now the conquerors
Tir'd with the toil of murder, drunk with blood,
Inſtead of death pronounc'd our ſlavery.

Yet

Yet ſtill new woes remain. This GENGIS-KAN,
That leads this ſwarm from forth the Northern hive,
This tyrant, born to be the bane of *China*,
Here formerly abode, unknown and ſcorn'd.
Now all-incens'd, implacable he comes,
To glut his anger, and revenge his wrongs.
His ſavage nation's form'd by other laws
Than our ſoft people: Fields, and tents, and cars
Their wonted dwelling, ev'n the wide extent
Of this vaſt city would appear confinement.
No ſenſe have they of our fair arts and laws,
But mean with barb'rous rage to overturn
Theſe walls, ſo long the wonder of the world.

IDAME.

Too ſure the victor comes reſolv'd on vengeance.
In my obſcurity I plac'd ſome hopes;
But Heav'n, alas! determin'd to deſtroy us,
Has ſcatter'd the kind cloud that late conceal'd us.

ZAMTI.

Perhaps ev'n yet the Gods will ſave *the Orphan:*
Be his ſecurity our only care——
What means this *Tartar* here?

IDAME.

O ſhield me, Heav'n!

SCENE IV.

ZAMTI, IDAME, ASSELI, OCTAR, *and* Guards.

OCTAR.

Hear, and obey, ye ſlaves, there yet remains
The laſt and youngeſt ſon of all your kings.
'Tis ye protect him, and your raſh compaſſion
Preſerves an enemy we would deſtroy.

I here command you, in the mighty name
Of the great conqueror of all mankind,
Give up this infant; ſee it quickly brought me.
If you delay, again within theſe walls
Shall havock ſtalk in blood, and you the firſt
Shall fall a ſacrifice. Day flies, night comes;
Think, and beware; before the cloſe of eve,
If life is precious, ſee that ye obey.

SCENE V.

ZAMTI, IDAME.

IDAME.

Where will our ſorrows end, when ev'ry moment
Teems with new horrors; and produces evils,
Which, till this day of death, th' affrighted ſoul
Could ne'er conceive. Alas! you anſwer not,
But ſigh in vain to Heaven, that oppreſſes us——
And muſt thou, offspring of ſo many Kings!
Be ſacrific'd to pleaſe a ruffian ſoldier?

ZAMTI.

I've promis'd, I have ſworn to ſave his life.

IDAME.

Ah! what can your weak help avail him now?
Your oaths, your fond endearments, or your promiſe?
We have not ev'n hope left.

ZAMTI.

O Heav'n! my IDAME,
And could'ſt thou then behold this child of kings
Butcher'd by *Scythians?*

IDAME.

No, the very thought
Makes my ſad eyes run o'er; and if, alas!
Our own dear child demanded not my care,
I would ſay, Death! my ZAMTI, ſince our kings
Fall by the *Scythian*, let not us ſurvive them!

ZAMTI.

Who, plung'd in miſery, views death with dread?
The guilty fear, the wretched wiſh for death;
The brave defy, and triumph in the face on't;
The wiſe, who know that death at laſt muſt come,
Without a ſhock receive it.

IDAME.

Why is this?
What mean theſe dreadful words? upon the ground
You fix your eyes, your hair ſtands all an end,
Your cheek grows pale, and tears are in your eyes.
My boſom anſwers yours, feels all its griefs:
But what reſolve you?

ZAMTI.

To obſerve my oath.
Go, wait my coming near the Royal Infant.

IDAME.

O, that my cries and prayers could protect him!

SCENE VI.

ZAMTI, ETAN.

ETAN.

Alas! my Lord, your pity can't preſerve him.
His death alone can ſave the ſtate from ruin,
The people's ſafety aſk it.

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

Yes,—— I ſee
A ſacrifice moſt dreadful muſt be made.——
Attend me, ETAN!—— Is your country dear?——
Say, do you own that GOD of Heav'n and Earth
Worſhipp'd by all our fathers, but unknown
To the rude *Bonze*, and by theſe *Scythians* ſcorn'd?

ETAN.

Own him? he is my boſom's ſole ſupport:
I mourn my country's woes, nor hope redreſs
But from his power.

ZAMTI.

By his ſacred name,
By all his power ſwear, thou'lt ne'er reveal
The ſecret purpoſe, which to thy performance
I now commend: ſwear that thou wilt accompliſh
That which the laws, the int'reſts of thy country,
My duty and my GOD by me command thee.

ETAN.

I ſwear it; and may all our common woes
Be heap'd on me alone, if e'er betraying
Your ſacred charge, or faultering in my zeal,
My tongue or hand ſhall ever prove unfaithful!

ZAMTI.

I muſt delay no longer.

ETAN.

How! in tears!
Alas! amid ſo many miſeries,
Whence this new cauſe of grief?

ZAMTI.

His fate is fix'd.
The cruel order's given.

ETAN.

Time grows ſhort;
Yet ſure this child, which is to you a ſtranger——

ZAMTI.

Stranger! this ſtranger child! my King a ſtranger!

ETAN.

His father was indeed our King. Alas!
I know it, and I freeze with horror: ſpeak,
What muſt I do?

ZAMTI.

My very looks are watch'd,
And all my ſteps obſerv'd; but thou'rt unnotic'd.
Thou know'ſt th' aſylum of our ſacred charge:
Avail thyſelf of thine obſcurity,
And for a time within the monuments,
Built by our ſires, conceal this Royal Infant.
Thence ſhall be ſoon convey'd to *Corea*'s chief
This tender ſhoot of *China*'s Royalty.
Save we at leaſt from theſe fell murderers
This hapleſs child, the object of their fears.
Save we Our King, and leave the reſt to me.

ETAN.

Without this mournful pledge what threatens you?
Say, can you anſwer all the victor's rage?

ZAMTI.

Yes, I can ſatisfy it.

ETAN.

You, my Lord!

ZAMTI.

O nature! O tyrannic duty!

ETAN.

How!

ZAMTI.

Go, from his cradle take my only ſon.

ETAN.

ETAN.

Your ſon!

ZAMTI.

Think of the King you ought to ſave.
Take my ſon—— let his blood—— I can no more.

ETAN.

Ah! what do you command me?

ZAMTI.

Spare a father,
His miſeries, and moſt of all his weakneſs.
Oppoſe not my deſign, but quick fulfil
The ſolemn vow thou'ſt made.

ETAN.

Alas! you wrung
That raſh vow from me. To what dreadful duty
Does the performance bind me? your great ſoul,
And generous purpoſe I admire with horror.
But if my friendſhip——

ZAMTI.

No, it muſt be ſo.
I am a father; and a father's grief
Hath told me more, much more than thou canſt ſay.
I've ſilenc'd blood, do thou bid friendſhip peace.
Away.

ETAN.

I muſt obey.

ZAMTI.

For pity leave me.

SCENE VII.

ZAMTI *ſolus.*

I've ſilenc'd blood!—— Ah, moſt unhappy father!
That voice, alas! too loudly calls upon me.

My wife and infant rend my ſoul with anguiſh:
O charm to ſilence, Heav'n, the voice of grief,
Nor let me know the weakneſs of my ſoul.
Man is too weak, alas! to conquer nature:
Support him, Heaven! and when his cares are vain,
His drooping virtue with thy grace ſuſtain!

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

ZAMTI *ſolus.*

ETAN too long delays his ſad return.
I long, yet fear, to know the deed's diſpatch'd;
I wiſh, yet dread, his coming. Oh! my ſon,
My dear, dear infant! art thou then deſtroy'd?
Have they made up this horrid ſacrifice?
I could not to the *Scythian*'s butcher hand
Myſelf deliver you. Heav'n give me ſtrength
To hear the ſad ſucceſs of my attempt,
And hide the anguiſh of my tortur'd ſoul!

SCENE II.

ZAMTI, ETAN.

ZAMTI.

My friend!— I underſtand— your tears explain it.

ETAN.

Your hapleſs ſon——

ZAMTI.

Ah! ſpeak of him no more;
Speak of our Monarch's ſon, the hope o'th' Empire.
Say, is he ſafe?

ETAN.

The holy monuments
Of his great anceſtors from hoſtile eyes

His life and woes conceal. To you he owes
A life, whoſe dawn in heavineſs comes on:
Too fatal gift perhaps.

ZAMTI.

He lives: enough.
O you, my Royal Maſters, to whoſe ſhades
My only child I ſacrifice, forgive
A father's tears!

ETAN.

Within theſe conquer'd walls
Your ſorrows ſpeak too loudly.

ZAMTI.

Oh! my friend,
In what ſad manſion ſhall my grief have vent?
And how ſhall I ſuſtain the firſt approach,
Bitter upbraidings, yellings, wild deſpair,
And imprecations of a furious mother?
Let us at firſt, if poſſible, deceive her!

ETAN.

The ruffians, in her abſence, took your ſon,
And to the cruel victors ſtrait convey'd him.
I flew immediately to ſave, if poſſible,
Th' endanger'd *Orphan*.

ZAMTI.

Tell her, my good ETAN,
That we have ſav'd the Heir of *China*; tell her,
Our boy is ſafe; and thus with kind deluſion
Win her, if poſſible, to fond belief.
Alas! that truth ſo often ſhould be cruel!
Mankind adore it; and it makes them wretched.
Come then, my ETAN!—Heav'n! my wife approaches,
And death and madneſs ſtare within her eyes.

SCENE

SCENE III.

ZAMTI, IDAME.

IDAME.

What have I ſeen? Barbarian! is it poſſible?
Did you command this horrid ſacrifice?
Ah! no, I can't believe it; angry heav'n
Ne'er fill'd your boſom with ſuch cruelty;
You cannot be more hard and barbarous
Than the rough Tartar. Canſt thou weep then, ZAMTI?

ZAMTI.

Ah! weep with me, my IDAME; but try
To ſave your King.

IDAME.

How! ſacrifice my ſon?

ZAMTI.

Such is our hapleſs lot: but think, dear wife,
That CITIZEN's a holier tie than MOTHER.

IDAME.

Rules nature then ſo feebly in your breaſt?

ZAMTI.

Alas! too ſtrong; but weaker than my duty:
I would preſerve our child; but more, much more,
To my unhappy maſter's blood I owe.

IDAME.

No, I diſclaim this ſavage ſtrength of ſoul.
I've ſeen theſe walls in aſhes, this high throne
O'erturn'd, and wept our monarch's hapleſs fate:
But by what madneſs, ſtill more horrible,
Will you bring on a poor wife's death, and ſhed
The blood of your own child, they not demand?

Our kings interr'd, and vaniſh'd into duſt,
Are they your gods, and do you dread their thunder?
And have you ſworn to theſe weak gods intomb'd
To ſacrifice your ſon? Alas! my ZAMTI,
The great and ſmall, the ſubject and the monarch,
Diſtinguiſh'd for a time by idle marks,
Equal by nature, equal by misfortune,
Each bears enough, that bears his own diſtreſs.
It is our part, amid this gen'ral wreck
To gather up our ſad remains.—— Good heav'n!
Where had I been, if my credulity
Had fall'n into the net was ſpread before me!
If by the ORPHAN's ſide I had remained,
My infant-victim would to butcher hands
Have been deliver'd; I no more a mother
Had fall'n beneath the knife that kill'd my child.
Thanks to my love, that troubled and unquiet
Call'd me, like inſtinct, to the fatal cradle!
I found them carrying off my lovely babe,
And with a mother's fury tore him from them.
Barbarian! ev'n the cruel raviſhers
Wanted thy ſavage firmneſs. To a ſlave,
Whoſe breaſt with nurſing care has long ſuſtain'd
His little life, the precious charge I gave.
Thus have I ſav'd from death the child and mother,
Nay more, my ZAMTI, ſav'd th' unhappy ſire.

ZAMTI.

How! is my ſon then living?

IDAME.

Yes, thank heaven!
Kind, in thine own deſpight, to bleſs thee ſtill.
Repent you of your raſhneſs.

ZAMTI,

ZAMTI.

God of heaven!
Forgive this joy that will not be repreſs'd,
And for a moment mixes with my grief.
O my dear IDAME, his days are few:
In vain you would prolong his life, in vain
Conceal this fatal off'ring. On demand,
If we not render up his forfeit life,
The jealous tyrants ſoon will be reveng'd;
And all the citizens with us deſtroy'd
Too ſadly ſhall repay thy cruel care.
Enclos'd by ſoldiers, there's no refuge left;
And my poor boy, thou fondly ſtriv'ſt to ſave,
Cannot be reſcued from the hand of ſlaughter.
He muſt die.

IDAME.

Stay! dear ZAMTI, ſtay, I charge thee!

ZAMTI.

Ah!— he muſt die.

IDAME.

Muſt die! hold, on thy life!
Fear my deſpair and fury, fear a mother.

ZAMTI.

I know no fear but to betray my duty.
Abandon yours; me and my life abandon
To the deteſted conqu'ror's impious rage.
Go, aſk my death of GENGIS; go, he'll grant it.
Bathe in a huſband's blood your hands, and fill
With monſtrous deaths this day of parricide.
Horror on horror's head ſtill heap, at once
Betray your GOD, your COUNTRY, and your KING.

IDAME.

My king! what claim have monarchs in the grave?
Owe I my blood a tribute to their aſhes?

Or does a ſubject's duty bind thee more,
Than the ſtrong ties of father and of huſband?
Nature and marriage are the firſt of laws,
The duties, and chief bonds of all mankind:
Theſe laws deſcend from heav'n, the reſt are human.
O make me not abhor the blood of kings!—
Yes, ſave the ORPHAN from the victor's ſword,
But ſave him not by parricide. O let
His days be bought at any *other* price,
Far from abandoning, I fly to aid him.
I pity him. O pity thou thyſelf,
Pity thy guiltleſs infant, and O pity
His poor diſtracted mother, who doats on thee!
No more I threaten; at thy knees I fall.—
O hapleſs father, dear though cruel huſband,
For whom I ſcorn'd, which haply you remember,
The man whom fortune now has made our maſter;
Grant me the offspring of our pureſt love;
Nor O! oppoſe the ſtrong and tender cries
Of love, that even now ſhake all your frame!

ZAMTI.

Ah! do not thus abuſe thy power o'er me,
Nor join with nature to oppoſe my duty.
O thou too weak of ſoul! if you but knew!—

IDAME.

Yes I am weak; a mother ſhould be ſo.
Yet thou ſhould'ſt not upbraid my ſoul of weakneſs,
Were I to follow thee to death or torture:
And if, to glut the bloody victor's rage,
The mother's murder may redeem the child,
I'm ready: IDAME ſhall ne'er complain;
And her heart beats as nobly as thy own.

ZAMTI.

Alas! I know thy virtues.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

ZAMTI, IDAME, OCTAR, *with Guards.*

OCTAR.

Dare ye, ſlaves,
Reſume the pledge that I commanded from you?
Follow them, ſoldiers, and the child conceal'd
See they reſign. Away, your Emp'ror comes:
Here bring the victim to your maſter's feet.
Soldiers obſerve them.

ZAMTI.

We'll obey your orders:
We will reſign the infant.

IDAME.

Never, never.
No, I'll not yield him up, but with my life.

OCTAR.

Away with that bold woman. Lo, the Emperor!
Let not theſe captive ſlaves approach his preſence.

SCENE V.

GENGIS, OCTAR, OSMAN, *Soldiers.*

GENGIS.

Too far they puſh my right of victory.
Sheath'd be the ſword, and ſlaughter check its courſe!
And henceforth let the vanquiſh'd breathe ſecure!
Terror I ſent before me, but bring peace.
The Child of Kings deſtroy'd ſhall glut my rage:
In his blood will I choak the fatal ſeeds
Of dark conſpiracy and bold rebellion,
Which ſuch weak phantoms of a prince inſpire.

His fathers are all fallen: he muſt follow.
Let the kings die, the ſubjects all ſhall live.
Ceaſe to deſtroy thoſe noble monuments,
Reſpect thoſe ſacred prodigies of art,
And let them ſtand as the rewards of valour.
Ceaſe to commit to flames and deſolation
Thoſe Archives of the Laws, vaſt ſcrolls of writing,
And all thoſe works of genius, you deſpiſe.
From error if they ſprung, that error's uſeful;
It makes the people docil and obedient.
OCTAR, I deſtine you to bear my banners
Where the ſun riſes from his watry bed.
[*To one of his followers.*
In conquer'd *India*, humble in its ruin,
Of my decrees be thou th' interpreter;
While in the Weſt my victor ſons ſhall fly
From *Samarcand*'s proud walls to *Tanais*' banks.
Away: OCTAR remain.

SCENE VI.

GENGIS, OCTAR.

GENGIS.

Could'ſt thou believe
That fate would lift me to this height of glory?
I trample on this throne, and here I reign,
Where late I ſcarcely durſt uplift my eyes:
Here in this palace, this proud city, where
Mix'd with the vulgar crowd, and ſeeking refuge,
I underwent the ſcorn, which in diſtreſs
The ſtranger takes of th' haughty citizen.
A *Scythian* they diſdain'd, with ſhame and outrage
Receiv'd my ill-form'd wiſhes. Nay, my OCTAR,

A peeviſh woman here refus'd that hand
Beneath whoſe pow'r now trembles all mankind.

OCTAR.

Why, now exalted to this height of glory,
When the whole world lays proſtrate at your feet,
Comes o'er your memory this idle thought?

GENGIS.

My ſoul, I do confeſs, was always hurt
With the affronts my humble fortune ſuffer'd.
I never knew but this one thought of anguiſh,
And here believ'd my ſoul would find repoſe.
But 'tis not in the ſplendor of my fortune,
The pleaſure fame, or love, they ſay, beſtows.
I feel an indignation, that's below me;
And yet methinks, I'd have her know her king,
Make her look up from baſeneſs, to his glory,
Whoſe tenderneſs her folly turn'd to rage;
That when ſhe ſees the lot ſhe might have ſhar'd,
Her fury and deſpair may give me vengeance.

OCTAR.

My ear, my Lord, has ever been accuſtom'd
To cries of fame and victory; of walls
O'erturn'd and ſmoaking at your feet: Of love
And all theſe tender tales I nothing know.

GENGIS.

No, ſince the hour my ſoul was here ſubdued,
Since all my fierceneſs was ſo poorly conquer'd,
I guarded my firm heart from the return
Of that mean ſoftneſs, which they here call Love.
You, IDAME, I own, within this breaſt
Mad'ſt an impreſſion I ne'er knew till then.
In our rough females of the frozen North
There is no beauty that enchains the ſoul.
Thoſe ſavage conſorts of our hardy labours

Are

Are barb'rous, rude, robuſt, and maſculine.
But here a new infection ſeiz'd my ſoul,
Darting from th' eyes of IDAME: Her words,
Her looks breath'd tenderneſs. Her ſcorn,
I thank it, nouriſh'd this my noble fury,
And her diſdain releas'd me from her bonds.
This tyrant charm, this ſov'reign of the heart
Would have deſtroy'd my honour. My whole ſoul
Is due to glory. I've ſubdued the world,
Inſtead of waſting in mean love my days.
No, this diſgraceful wound, I once endur'd,
Shall ne'er re-enter this offended breaſt.
I baniſh the low thought: a woman rule me!
No, I'll forget her, will not ſee her, OCTAR.
Let her at leiſure mourn her fooliſh ſcorn;
Enquire not of her, I forbid thy ſearch.

OCTAR.

Here more important cares call out upon us.

GENGIS.

Yes, I reflect too deeply on theſe errors.

SCENE VII.

GENGIS, OCTAR, OSMAN.

OSMAN.

The ſacrifice, my Liege, was juſt prepar'd,
And the guards rang'd in order all around;
But an event, which I expected not,
Demands new orders, and ſuſpends his fate:
A woman all-diſtract, and bath'd in tears,
Came raving to the guard with out-ſtretch'd arms;
And pierc'd our ears with her alarming cries.
Stop, 'tis my ſon you would aſſaſſinate:
'Tis my ſon; they deceive you in the victim.

The

The black deſpair, that ſpoke within her eyes,
Her face, her voice, her cries and exclamations,
Her rage, intrepid in the midſt of grief,
Were the plain marks of nature and a mother.
But then, at our command, appear'd her huſband,
Not leſs diſtreſs'd and wretched than herſelf,
But dark, and all-collected in his grief:
You have, he cried, the laſt of all our kings,
Strike, that's the child whoſe blood was your demand.
His eyes, while thus he ſpoke, ran o'er with tears:
The woman, ſtruck with horror at his words,
Long time remain'd without ſpeech, life, or motion;
But ſhe no ſooner felt returning life,
Than, O my ſon! reſtore my ſon! ſhe cry'd.
Griefs ſo ſincere were never counterfeit,
Such bitter tears deluſion never ſhed.
Doubt and confuſion overwhelm'd us all,
And here I came to know your dread commands.

GENGIS.

I ſhall diſcover this weak artifice,
And who deceives me ſurely feels my vengeance:
What? wou'd this race of ſlaves delude their Lord?
And muſt their blood begin to ſtream again?

OCTAR.

This woman cannot baffle your high prudence.
The Emp'ror's infant offspring was her care;
Fond of her maſter's children, love and grief
And fond enthuſiaſm equals nature.
Her grief ſo unaffected aids th' impoſture:
But ſoon diſcovering her hidden purpoſe,
This cloud of darkneſs ſhall clear up before you.

GENGIS.

What is this woman?

OCTAR.

Wife, they ſay, my Lord,
To a grave chief, one of thoſe letter'd ſages
All *Aſia* treats with rev'rence and reſpect;
Who proud of th' honours of their ſacred laws,
Upon their vain tribunal dar'd to brave
A hundred kings. Their croud's innumerable;
But now they're all in chains, and own the force
Of laws more ſovereign. This haughty ſlave
Is ZAMTI call'd, who o'er the infant watch'd
Due to the ſacrifice.

GENGIS.

Examine them,
And make this guilty pair confeſs the truth.
Moreover let our guards, their poſt preſerv'd,
Watch, where our prudent caution lately plac'd them,
Let none eſcape: they talk of a ſurpriſe,
And ſome attempt from *Corea*. Soldiers too
Upon the river-banks have late been ſeen.
See, if theſe wretches will provoke their fate,
And rouze the ſleeping lion from his den:
See, if while earth owns GENGIS for its Lord,
The rebel world muſt groan beneath his ſword.

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

GENGIS, OSMAN, *Guards.*

GENGIS.

HAVE they clear'd up th' impoſture of theſe ſlaves?
Their crime detected, and reveng'd my wrongs?
Say, is this phantom of a prince, their care,
Reſtor'd at laſt to OCTAR?

OSMAN.

All's confuſion.
This ſteady *Mandarine*, at ſight of torture,
Still undiſmay'd perſiſted in his anſwer,
And ſeem'd upon his brow to carry truth.
His trembling wife by tears alone replied,
And appear'd ſtill more beautiful in grief.
Spite of our manly ſpirit, our rough ſouls
Were ſoften'd into pity: never ought
So beauteous ſtruck our ſight. This hapleſs fair
Demands to throw her at your Highneſs' feet.
" Let the great Conqueror of Kings but hear me!
" Let him protect an infant's innocence!
" Even in his anger I will hope for mercy;
" Since he's all-powerful he will be noble.
" Can he refuſe the cries of the unhappy?"
'Tis thus ſhe ſpoke; and I would fain have promis'd
That you'd admit her to your royal preſence.

GENGIS.

Yes, I will know what means this myſtery.
[*To his train.*
Let her come; go, and ſtrait conduct her hither.
Let her not think by whinings and complainings,
By deep-fetch'd ſighs, and ſome few idle drops,
To blind the eyes of caution or revenge.
The women of this place can ne'er abuſe me:
Too well, alas! I know their faithleſs tears,
And my firm heart hath long been ſteel'd againſt them.
She ſeeks a boon on which her fate depends.
And if ſhe tries to practiſe on my faith
She meets with certain death.

OSMAN.

My Lord, ſhe comes.

GENGIS.

What do I ſee! is't poſſible? O Heaven!
Do I not dream; and is't not all deluſion?
'Tis IDAME; 'tis ſhe, and my rapt ſoul——

SCENE II.

GENGIS, IDAME, OCTAR, OSMAN, *Guards.*

IDAME.

Kill, kill, my Lord, a moſt unhappy woman!
Revenge is all your own, and I expect it,
But, O preſerve from death a guiltleſs child!

GENGIS.

Take comfort, Madam; lay theſe fears aſide——
I am amaz'd, I own, as well as you——
Fortune, that governs all, deceiv'd us both,
And much the times are chang'd. But tho' high Heaven,
Of a rough *Scythian*, whom you lately ſcorn'd,

Has

Has made the conqueror of ſubject *Aſia*,
Be not diſmay'd. Your Emperor forgets
Th' affronts which here were thrown on TEMUGIN.
This laſt remainder of a hoſtile race,
To vict'ry and my throne I ſacrifice.
The quiet of the ſtate demands his life,
And this pledge muſt be render'd up. The death
Of your own child you need not fear: Myſelf
From danger will protect him.

IDAME.

O misfortune!

GENGIS.

But of the truth I muſt be ſatisfied:
With what deluſion they would blind my rage,
And how yourſelf and huſband would deceive me.

IDAME.

O pity the diſtreſſes of the wretched!

GENGIS.

You know I ought to hate this raſh offender.

IDAME.

Hate him! my Lord.

GENGIS.

I've ſaid too much.

IDAME.

Reſtore,
O quick reſtore the infant to my arms!
You've promis'd me, and have pronounc'd his ſafety.

GENGIS.

His ſafety's in your hands: my glory's ſcorn'd,
My orders all contemn'd, and pow'r diſgrac'd:
You know the full extent of all my wrongs.
To take away the victim to my rage,
To diſobey my ſovereign command

Is

Is poor offence, to all my former wrongs.
'Tis not the inſult of to-day alone
That juſtifies my rage. Your huſband—— huſband!
Hell! hell! that name alone demands my vengeance.
What is this huſband, that beneath his ſway
Could bend your captive heart? what is this ſlave
That thinks to brave my fury? Let him come.

IDAME.

My virtuous huſband, now the wretched cauſe
Of all my grief, has ſerv'd his God and King
With honeſt love, and I was happy in him.

GENGIS.

In him?—— when did you form this curſt alliance?

IDAME.

While far from our bleſt walls, your proſp'rous fate
Remoteſt nations to your arms ſubdued.

GENGIS.

Ay, in that day that GENGIS was deſpis'd;
That day, that calls for vengeance on you both,
And bids me *China* with my hate purſue.

SCENE III.

GENGIS, OCTAR, OSMAN, *on one ſide.*
IDAME, ZAMTI, *on the other,* Guards.

GENGIS.

Speak? are my ſovereign commands obey'd?
Haſt thou reſign'd the Son o'th' Emperor?

ZAMTI.

I have fulfill'd my duty: it is done.

GENGIS.

GENGIS.

You know that I can puniſh fraud and inſolence;
You know that nothing can eſcape my rage;
That if the Royal Infant you've conceal'd,
Spite of your artifice he'll ſoon be found,
And death alone ſhall anſwer for your crime.
[*To his guards.*
But I'll believe you: Go, and ſeize the child
This ſlave has render'd up a ſacrifice,
Kill him.

ZAMTI.

Unhappy father!

IDAME.

Stay, Barbarians!
Ah! my good Lord, is this then your compaſſion,
And is it thus a conqu'ror keeps his word?

GENGIS.

Is't thus I am abuſed, and fool'd by ſlaves?
It is too much: hear now my laſt reſolve.
Tell me this moment what this infant is,
Inform me the whole truth, or elſe he dies.

IDAME.

My ſon prevails; and if this ſad confeſſion
Which nature tears from my afflicted ſoul
Appears a new offence; and if for blood
Your ſoul ſtill thirſts, ſtrike here: for worſe than death
Already racks my breaſt. Strike here, but ſave,
O ſave the generous the noble ZAMTI!
It is too true that our moſt Royal Maſter,
Who, but for GENGIS, might have ſtill ſurviv'd,
Committed to our care that ſacred charge,
Honour'd by all but thee. Too many horrors
Follow'd your victory, too much, alas!

Has

Has ſavage cruelty eclips'd your fame.
So many innocents all plung'd in blood,
The Emperor and his Queen, and five ſons ſlain,
This mighty Empire by the ſword laid waſte,——
Could not ſo much of carnage glut your rage?
A ſtern barbarian came to aſk the child,
That deareſt pledge committed to our care,
Son of ſo many kings, our only hope.
My huſband, at this cruel order, ſtill retain'd
His faith inviolate, nor ſwerv'd from duty.
He gave up his own ſon. His tortur'd ſoul
The agonies of nature ſhook in vain;
In vain affection pleaded for a ſon.
You never ſhould have known this fatal ſecret;
I ſhould have more admir'd his noble firmneſs;
I ſhould have copied it: But I'm a mother.
My ſoul could not ſuſtain the cruel conflict,
And for a ſacrifice reſign my ſon.
Alas! my grief and violent deſpair
Too plainly ſpoke the weakneſs of a mother.
There ſtands the hapleſs father of the child
Whoſe virtues were his only crimes. O ſpare
The babe, whoſe innocence could ne'er offend,
And ſpare the father, whoſe offence was virtue.
Me, puniſh me: who have at once betray'd
My huſband and my king. O noble ZAMTI,
Thrice worthy all my love and admiration,
Forgive the weakneſs of maternal love.
If you die, ſo will I. At leaſt forgive
That I from ſlaughter have preſerv'd your ſon.

ZAMTI.

I forgive all: no more will I complain:
For my King's Son I have no more to fear.
He's plac'd in ſafety.

GENGIS.

GENGIS.

Traitor, ſlave, he is not.
Or bring him, villain, or your abject life
Shall anſwer for your crime.

ZAMTI.

My crime? it were
Indeed a crime, if I obey'd theſe orders.
The ſov'reign voice of my right noble Maſters
Speaks from the grave more loud than thy command.
You are my conqueror, but not my King.
If I ow'd you a ſubject's faith, to you
I would be faithful. Take my life, but ſtill
Reſpect my zeal. I gave you up my ſon;
I could reſign my deareſt child a victim:
Can you then think I tremble for my life?

GENGIS.

Away with him.

IDAME.

O, hear me!——

GENGIS.

Drag him hence.

IDAME.

On me, on me vent all your rage. O Heaven!
Could I have thought that by your cruel hand
I e'er ſhould loſe a King, a Son, and Huſband?
What! will ſoft pity never touch your ſoul?

GENGIS.

Go, follow him to whom your fate has bound you:
Follow your huſband. Tears ſhall never move me,
Nor keen reproaches melt me to compaſſion.

IDAME.

This I foreſaw: now all my hopes are flown.

GENGIS.

Go, IDAME: if in my own deſpight

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Nor keen reproaches melt me to compaſſion.

IDAME.

This I foreſaw: now all my hopes are flown.

GENGIS.

Go, IDAME: if in my own deſpight

Pity again ſhould enter my weak heart,
You know the wrongs which muſt be ſatisfied.

SCENE IV.

GENGIS, OCTAR.

GENGIS.

Whence come theſe ſighs? theſe doubtings whence? what God
Spoke in her, and maintain'd her ſinking cauſe?
Is there a pow'r in virtue or in beauty
Above my high authority? Ah! OCTAR,
Stay! for I fear, I tremble for myſelf:
I want a friend; my weak ſoul needs ſupport.

OCTAR.

Since I muſt ſpeak, receive my honeſt counſel:
If you would ſacrifice this hoſtile race,
If the laſt branches from the wither'd trunk
You would lop off, delay not your revenge.
The cruel rigour of thoſe bloody deeds,
Which muſt ſupport a throne by conqueſt gain'd,
Should fall immediate; rapid, ſure, and quick.
The bloody ſtream in torrents ſhould deſcend.
Time reſtores peace and order; reconciles
The people to their fate; and wipes away
The bloody traces of their former woes.
They ſoon forgive, and ev'n forget their wrongs.
But when the blood's drawn from them drop by drop,
When the wound ſlowly clos'd, is ſoon again
Torn open by the hand of violence,
When ſlaughter ſeems to ſhape his courſe anew,
Then fierce deſpair ſtirs up to deeds of rage
Their coward ſouls, and makes a feeble race

A race of ſtubborn potent adverſaries;
More dangerous, the more they are ſubdued.

GENGIS.

But then this IDAME! this haughty woman!
Wife to a ſlave that braves me in my anger!

OCTAR.

You owe her no compaſſion, but revenge.
Your love for her, you own, was idle paſſion,
Of a light tranſient flame, the haſty ſparks:
Her fooliſh ſcorn, her anger, and the time,
Have in your breaſt its weak remains extinguiſh'd.
She's in your eyes a guilty wretch, the wife
Of a low criminal.

GENGIS.

He ſhall be puniſh'd:
I ſhould, I will have vengeance. Pity him!
What! ſpare a ſlave I hate! that braves me too!
My rival!

OCTAR.

Why is not his death pronounc'd?
You have him in your pow'r, and yet he lives.

GENGIS.

Juſt heav'n! is't come to this? and does my heart,
Subdued by beauty, and diſarm'd by tears,
Forego its rage, heave ſhameful ſighs, and feel
Th' alarms of love? I rival to a ſlave!
A happy ſlave! and yet permit him live;
Yet know ſhe doats upon him! Ah! I feel
Reſpect for IDAME ev'n in her huſband:
I fear to plunge the dagger in his breaſt,
Leſt the dire ſtroke ſhould wound her boſom too.
Is it then true I love? is't I that ſigh?
What is then love that has ſuch ſov'reign pow'r?

OCTAR.

I've only learnt to fight and to obey.
My cars, my ſteeds, my arrows and my quiver,
Theſe are my only paſſions, only ſcience;
To this capriciouſneſs of ſoul a ſtranger.
I only know of victory and plunder;
That captives always to the victors yield.
This melting ſoftneſs, to our race unknown,
Beliès your fortune and your character.
What is't to you that one more ſlave attends
In bitterneſs of ſoul your dread decree?

GENGIS.

I am aware how far my pow'r extends:
I may, too well I know, uſe violence.
But O! what cruel, what imbitter'd joy,
To force a heart that renders not itſelf!
To ſee thoſe eyes that ſhould be lighted up
With tranſport, ſunk beneath a cloud of tears!
And to poſſeſs a ſlave, who views your love
With horror, and the agonies of grief!
The monſters of the foreſts we inhabit,
See happier days, and know leſs barbarous loves.
Spite of myſelf, my anger, and revenge,
The lovely IDAME ſubdued my ſoul.
I tremble that my heart ſhould recollect it.
I was enrag'd; and yet her ſoul o'er mine,
Over my character, and ſov'reign will,
Ruled with a pow'r more abſolute and ſure,
Than I received from war, and victory
Over a hundred kings dethron'd, enſlav'd.
'Twas this enflam'd my rage and indignation:
But I'll for ever chaſe her from my heart;
I will forget her, my ſole aim be glory——
Alas! ſhe comes, ſhe triumphs, and I love.

SCENE

SCENE V.

GENGIS, OCTAR, OSMAN.

GENGIS.

The news? what ſays ſhe? what does ſhe reſolve?

OSMAN.

Sooner to periſh at her huſband's ſide,
Than to diſcover where the Child's conceal'd.
They ſwear to meet unmov'd the worſt of deaths.
Her huſband holds her trembling in his arms,
Supports her conſtancy, and ſteels her ſoul.
Thus let us die together, cry they; while around
The people weep, and ſeem to ſhake with horror.

GENGIS.

Does IDAME demand her death of me?
Ah! bid her be of comfort; let her know
Each minute of her life is precious to me.
Enough: go, fly!

SCENE VI.

GENGIS, OCTAR.

OCTAR.

What orders do you give
Touching this Infant they conceal from vengeance?

GENGIS.

Any.

OCTAR.

You ſhould command your faithful guards
To force the Infant e'en from IDAME.

GENGIS.

GENGIS.

O hurt not IDAME: but haſte, good OCTAR,
To make her haughty huſband know my pow'r.
This Infant's blood were poor and low revenge,
My rage demands a nobler ſacrifice.

OCTAR.

ZAMTI?

GENGIS.

Ay, ZAMTI.

OCTAR.

Oh! beware, my Lord;
Nor let a thought ſo mean debaſe your ſoul.
Would you new firmneſs add to his deſpair?

GENGIS.

I would preſerve my IDAME: the reſt
I leave to thee. Away!

OCTAR.

What would you do?
What is your hope?

GENGIS.

To talk with her again,
To ſee her, love her, and of her be lov'd;
Or elſe to be reveng'd, and give her death——
Alas! you ſee the weakneſs of my heart:
Spite of my haughty ſoul, weak paſſion's ſlave
I threaten, love, deſpair, and madly rave.

END of the THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

GENGIS, *and* Guards.

GENGIS.

AND is it thus that happineſs and peace,
The aim of all my labours, fly my ſearch?
Ah! now I feel the heavy cares of power.
To the ſad buſineſs of my tortur'd heart
I cannot give an hour. O IDAME!
For thee I wiſh; yet round me nought behold
But ſurly warriors, and an irkſome train.
[*To his train.*
Go, take your ſtation near the city walls,
Leſt haughty *Corea*'s troops attempt ſurprize.
They have proclaimed this Infant, Emperor;
And with his forfeit head I'll march againſt them.
For the laſt time tell ZAMTI to obey;
I have too long delay'd this child's deſtruction.
[*He remains alone.*
Away. Their diligence is tedious now,
When other cares take up my ſoul. Alas!
To awe the vanquiſh'd and the victors rule,
To foreſee dangers, half-form'd plots to cruſh,
And all the cruel buſineſs of a king,
Falls heavy on my heart, with foreign woes
And other cares perplext.—— O happier far
My humble fortune, abject, and unknown!

SCENE

SCENE II.

GENGIS, OCTAR.

GENGIS.

Well, haſt thou ſeen this ſtubborn *Mandarine?*

OCTAR.

No fear or danger moves him from his purpoſe.
My Lord, I bluſh'd to parley in your name
With a vile ſlave, whom you ſhould ſacrifice.
He view'd the torture with indifference,
And talk'd of duty to his King, and juſtice:
He braves his vanquiſhers; as if his voice
Preſcrib'd them laws. Him and his rebel wife
At once deſtroy, nor languiſh for a ſlave.
Puniſh the hated pair, whoſe inſolence
Affronts that power, which all the world obeys.

GENGIS.

Amazement! what a people have I conquer'd!
Whence are they? whence theſe elevated thoughts,
This native grandeur of the noble ſoul,
Which we in our rough climes ne'er felt or knew?
To a King dead, each ſacrificing nature,
One without murmur ſees his ſon deſtroy'd,
The other for a huſband aſks to die:
Nothing can ſhake them, nothing move their fear.
Whence, whence is this? with ſteady reaſon's eye,
When fall'n, enſlav'd, this people I ſurvey,
Though conqueror, my captives I revere,
And praiſe their virtues, while I give them chains.
I ſee their labours have adorn'd the world;
I ſee them an induſtrious, noble people;
Their Kings on wiſdom's baſis built their power,

To

To all the neighbour nations giving laws,
And reigning without conqueſt or the ſword.
Heav'n has allotted us rude force alone;
Battles our arts, and all our labours death.
Ah! what avails ſo much ſucceſs in war?
Or what the glories of a world enſlav'd?
We made the car of conqueſt red with blood:
Yet there's a greater fame, a nobler glory.
I'm jealous of their virtue, bluſh to ſee
The conquer'd ſoar above the conqueror.

OCTAR.

Can GENGIS ſuch a feeble race admire?
What boot their puny arts, that cannot ſave
The practiſers from ſlavery or death?
The weak ſhould ſerve the ſtrong. All earth muſt yield
To toil and valour. Why then ſtain your power
By inſults unreveng'd, and ſuffer ſlaves
To brave their conqu'ror? why, when lord of all,
Submit to bonds, to our brave race unknown?
And draw upon yourſelf reproach from thoſe
Whoſe arms have made you monarch of the world?
Shall then the brave companions of your labours
See all thoſe victories effac'd by love?
They bluſh at the mean thought, their ſouls diſdain it;
And by my voice their clamours reach your ears.
In theirs, as the ſtate's name, I call upon you.
Pardon a *Tartar*, pardon a rough ſoldier,
Grown grey in armour worn in your defence;
Who cannot ſee you a mean ſlave to love,
But preſents glory to your dazzled eyes.

GENGIS.

Let them ſeek IDAME.

OCTAR.

You would——

GENGIS.

Obey.

Seek her. Your zeal grows troubleſome and bold.
My ſubjects ev'n my frailties ſhall revere.

SCENE III.

GENGIS *ſolus.*

Fate will not be oppos'd; and doubtleſs Heav'n
Deſtines her for me.— What avails my greatneſs?
I have made wretches, and myſelf am wretched.
Of all the ſavages that fill my train,
Greedy of combat, prodigal of blood,
Has ever one ſpoke words of comfort to me,
Or ſooth'd the anguiſh of my aching ſoul?
Have all theſe ſtates enſlav'd e'er given my breaſt
One hour of peace? Ah! no: my wearied ſoul
Still ſought ſome pleaſing error, to diſperſe
The gloomy night of care, and to afford
Some conſolation on the throne of Empire.
OCTAR has ſhock'd me with his horrid counſel.
I am environ'd with a bloody train
Of fell aſſaſſins, diſciplin'd to death,
And form'd for ravage; born alone for war,
And ſhocking to a ſoul, refin'd by love.
Let them fight for me, follow me to death,
But never dare my actions to arraign.
Where is my IDAME?—'Tis ſhe; ſhe comes.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

GENGIS, IDAME.

IDAME.

Are then my griefs your ſport? and am I call'd
To be receiv'd with ſcorn? O ſpare a woman,
Nor add new anguiſh to a mother's woes!

GENGIS.

Be not diſmay'd. Your huſband may atone
His paſt offence, and ſtill receive our pardon.
I have already bid my vengeance ſleep,
And you alone could move my heart to mercy.
Perhaps 'tis not without high heav'n's decree,
That fortune has conducted me to you.
For ſurely IDAME was form'd by fate,
To make a conqu'ror ſtoop, enſlave a maſter,
And melt in me that ſtubbornneſs of ſoul,
The rough diſtinction of my native clime.
Then be adviſ'd, and mark me well: I reign
Within theſe walls, yet you may reaſſume
Dominion o'er me, though perhaps your ſcorn
Might rather warrant fury and revenge.
Our law permits divorce; ſubmit to that,
And make the conqu'ror of the world your ſlave.
If he is odious, yet a throne has charms,
And royal wreaths may wipe away your tears.
The int'reſt of the State and of the City
Forbid you to refuſe my proffer'd love.
Of love to parley now, may move your wonder:
The man, who overturn'd your Monarch's throne,
And all your Kings has mingled with the duſt,
Was ſcarce expected, while his furious arm

Was dealing death, again to fall before you.
But you was robb'd of your too eaſy heart,
And a baſe rival has uſurp'd my place.
You owe it to the conqu'ror of mankind,
Who now with twenty ſceptres is return'd,
To claim that love, once due to TEMUGIN.
You fix your eyes on earth, nor can I gueſs
What you reſolve. Forget my pow'r, forget
My fierceneſs, well reflect, and freely ſpeak.

IDAME.

Still to new changes ev'ry hour condemn'd,
Yet I confeſs that you have mov'd my wonder.
But if I can recal my ſcatter'd ſpirits
My anſwer ſhall amaze you more. That time
You may remember, and that humble life,
In which Heav'n once obſcur'd your future fame.
You was not then the terror of the world,
But lowly TEMUGIN: whole nations then
Bow'd not beneath your ſovereign command.
Then, when your hand was pure, 'twas proffer'd to me,
And know, that then I would not have refus'd it.

GENGIS.

What do I hear? O Heav'n! and did you love me?
Did you——

IDAME.

I own, againſt your ſighs and vows
My ſubject ſoul would never have rebell'd,
Had not the virtuous pair, that gave me life,
Reſign'd its duty to another Lord.
The pow'r of parents over us, you know:
They are the image of the God we ſerve,
And we for ever owe obedience to them.
This fallen Empire, on parental right
Was founded, on the ſolemn marriage faith,

On

On honour, juſtice, and reſpect of oaths:
On theſe 'twas built; and though beneath your arms
It ſink for ever, yet the noble ſpirit
Which taught us theſe, ſhall never, never die.
Your fortunes are much chang'd, but mine remain
Unalter'd, and the ſame.

GENGIS.

And did you love me?

IDAME.

What though I did? that very love were now
A threefold bar againſt our union,
Another reaſon I ſhould now refuſe you.
My marriage-bonds by Heav'n itſelf were form'd;
My huſband ſacred; to ſay more, I love him.
Before yourſelf, your throne, and all its greatneſs
I would prefer him. O forgive this warmth
That flows from honeſt love; nor think I boaſt
My conqueſt o'er your heart, or mean to brave
Your anger, or take pride in theſe denials,
Which riſe alone from juſtice and my duty.
I ſigh not for a throne; ſome other fair
Make happy with your ſceptre and your love,
Withdrawn from me, who know not how to prize them:
And O let me beſeech with earneſt pray'r,
That ZAMTI know not of your proffer'd love.
He'll be leſs proud o'th' triumph, than enrag'd
At this new outrage offer'd to my faith.

GENGIS.

Concerning him, my firm reſolve you know,
And he'll obey, if life is precious to him.

IDAME.

He will not do't, he never can obey:
And if the cruel agonies of torture
Could ſhake his ſoul from its integrity,

My faith and duty ſhould ſuſtain his weakneſs.
I would ſupport his fainting heart, and plead
Thoſe ſacred bonds his baſeneſs would diſhonour.

GENGIS.

What do I hear? can I believe it? Gods!
Can you thus love him after what has paſs'd,
When the barbarian huſband would have giv'n
Your child to certain death?

IDAME.

Barbarian huſband!
'Twas virtue in him; I admire him for it;
Though I felt all the weakneſs of a mother.
And was I ſo unjuſt, to hate him for it,
My pride would not permit me to deſert him.

GENGIS.

Still all you ſay amazes, and diſtracts me;
Thoſe virtues I adore, I wiſh to hate.
I love you more, the more you ſcorn my love,
At once you make my heart a ſlave, and rebel.
Fear me: for know, that ſpite of all my love,
My fury may outſtrip my tenderneſs.

IDAME.

I know your pow'r, and that you may exact
Death, or obedience to your dread command.
Yet the Laws live, and are above you ſtill.

GENGIS.

The Laws! what Laws dare contradict my will?
Here are no Laws, but ſuch as I impoſe:
I, a rough *Scythian*, your King, your Conqu'ror.
The Laws you follow have been fatal to me.
Yes, when e'er while our fortunes here were equal,
Our thoughts, our hearts were mutually inclin'd,
(For ſpite of all your ſcorn I now believe it)
When all united us, thoſe Laws I hate

Ordain'd

Ordain'd my ſhame, and your accurſed marriage.
I make them void; I ſpeak, and they're annull'd;
Thou, with the ſubject univerſe, obey.
Thoſe manners, uſages, and Laws you boaſt,
Are criminal, if they oppoſe my will.
I've order'd it; your huſband muſt reſign
Into my hands, your Emperor and You.
Their lives ſhall be the pledge of your obedience.
Think on't, you know how far I may revenge:
Think at what price you may appeaſe a King,
Who loves you, and yet bluſhes at his paſſion.

SCENE V.

IDAME, ASSELI.

IDAME.

Or death or infamy—— no other choice——
O Royal Infant! O my deareſt huſband!
When in my hands I hold your deſtiny,
My voice without one doubt pronounces Death.

ASSELI.

Ah! rather re-aſſume that pow'r, which Heav'n
Has given to virtuous beauty: re-aſſume
That pow'r, which makes this *Scythian* bend before you,
And own your influence. Sometimes a word
Can ſoften anger, and diſarm fierce rage.
Try; they can ev'ry thing, who know to pleaſe.

IDAME.

That I have pleas'd, is now my greateſt grief.

ASSELI.

Yet that alone can give the vanquiſh'd reſt.
In our calamities the bounteous Heavens
Have ordain'd you to check the tyrant's rage.

You

You ſaw how ſoon his irritated ſoul
Loſt all its fierceneſs, and was huſh'd to peace;
Elſe long ago in ZAMTI he had deſtroy'd
A hated rival: ZAMTI brav'd his rage,
And yet he lives; he lives too unremov'd
From you his wife; they tender you in him.
This conqu'ror, though he has laid waſte the world,
Still honours you; you may remember too
That he firſt wrought upon your virgin heart:
His paſſion formerly was pure and lawful.

IDAME.

Peace; ſay no more; 'tis baſeneſs but to think on't.

SCENE VI.

ZAMTI, IDAME, ASSELI.

IDAME.

Am I then ſtill, 'mid all our woes, your wife?
And are we ſtill permitted thus to meet?

ZAMTI.

Permitted? 'tis the tyrant's ſov'reign order;
And to his rage I owe this happy moment.

IDAME.

Have they inform'd you at what horrid price
The tyrant would grant your's and th' *Orphan*'s life?

ZAMTI.

O mention not, conſider not my life:
A ſingle citizen's a trivial loſs.
Forget it then: But O remember, IDAME,
That 'tis our duty to preſerve our King.
To him our lives and ſervices we owe,
And ev'n the blood of children born to ſerve him;
But owe him not the forfeit of our honour.

Yet

Yet certain death awaits the hapleſs *Orphan*,
Whom I've ſecreted in that dark aſylum,
Where all our ancient monarchs are intomb'd;
And where unleſs we can afford him aid,
He'll with his fathers ſhare the ſleep of death.
In vain the generous Prince of *Corea*
Waits the dear charge, my zeal has promis'd him.
ETAN, the faithful guardian of his life,
Loaded with chains, my cruel lot partakes.
You are the *Orphan*'s only refuge left.
'Tis you alone that muſt his threaten'd life,
Your ſon, your glory, and my honour ſave.
We will obey our tyrant's dread commands:
I'll give them up my ſon: I'll give up more.
Freed by my death, go, ſoothe the ruffian *Tartar*:
Paſs o'er my grave to this barbarian's arms.
Yet now I firſt behold grim death with horror,
Since it abandons you to this uſurper.
But my King aſks it, and I expiate
By my juſt death this impious ſacrifice.
Wed, with theſe horrid auſpices, the tyrant,
And with a mother's care ſtill guard your King.
Reign, that your King may live, and huſband die.
Reign at this price. It ſhall be ſo——

IDAME.

O hold!
Do you then know me? think you, I would buy
A throne with ſhame, my ZAMTI, and thy death?
Or do you think I'm leſs a wife than mother?
Alas! you dream, and your too rigid virtue
Twice in one day hath ſinn'd againſt itſelf,
Scorning the cries of nature and of love.
Ah! cruel to your ſon, to me more cruel,
Do you forget that I'm your wife, and love you?

All-righteous Heav'n has better taught my ſoul;
I'll ſave my King, yet not diſhonour you.
The tyrant, be it love, or be it ſcorn,
Conſtrains me not, nor watches my deſigns.
Within theſe walls, with bloody gore o'erflow'd,
I ſtill am free, nor are my ſteps obſerv'd.
The Prince of *Corea* by the ſecret path
May reach the tombs, wherein this precious charge
From the deſtroyer's eye now lays conceal'd.
I know each winding paſſage of the place;
I fly to give him timely nouriſhment,
To render him to *China*'s faithful friends,
Within my arms among their warlike ranks
To carry him, a gift from Heav'n, their aid.
I know that you muſt die; but, full of glory,
Our memory ſhall ever be rever'd.
When equal to the nobleſt we ſhall riſe,
O judge, if IDAME has ſtain'd your fame!

ZAMTI.

Heav'n! that inſpireſt, with thy arm ſuſtain her!
O IDAME! thy virtues o'ertop mine.
Haply for thee from ruin Heav'n may ſave
Thy Country, and thy Monarch from the grave.

END of the FOURTH ACT.

ACT V. SCENE I.

IDAME, ASSELI.

ASSELI.

HOW? is all loſt? are all our hopes then fled?
And are you ſtill a captive and a ſlave?
Alas! 'twere better not to have incens'd
This Conqueror. What could a feeble woman,
A helpleſs child, againſt ſuch force and pow'r
In vain oppoſing weakneſs?

IDAME.

Now all's o'er.
I've done my duty, ſtrove with vain attempt
To wreſtle with my fate: It will not be.
I am again a ſlave, and doom'd to wear
The tyrant's chains.

ASSELI.

Again the hapleſs *Orphan*
Becomes his prey, and dies as ſoon as born;
And ZAMTI muſt partake the Infant's fate.

IDAME.

The hour of both approaches: if their death
Is yet delay'd, 'tis only to prepare
More grievous torments for them. My dear ſon
Perhaps muſt follow them. The haughty victor
Call'd me before him, to increaſe my woes.
His very looks ſhot terror and diſmay:

Full oft he rais'd his arm, all red with blood,
Againſt the *Orphan*, and my hapleſs ſon.
I all in tears fell proſtrate at his feet,
And lay 'tween him and th' objects of his rage:
But he with roughneſs threw me from before him,
And with dire threats and angry looks departed,
Then ſoon again return'd ſtill more enrag'd:
Now cried for vengeance, now delay'd his purpoſe,
While round him ſtood a train of ſavage warriors,
Who ſeem'd to aſk his orders for my death.

ASSELI.

GENGIS would never give ſuch horrid orders:
Your huſband, whom he hates, ſtill lives; the *Orphan*
To th' hand of ſlaughter is not yet reſign'd,
But aſk for pardon, all will be forgiven.

IDAME.

No, all his furious love is turn'd to rage.
Oh! had you ſeen him double my diſtreſs,
Swear his fixt hate, and mock me in my tears!—

ASSELI.

This rage, a word, a tear from you abates.
This conquer'd lion, that roars thus in his chain,
Did he not love, would never threaten hate.

IDAME.

Or love or hate, 'tis time to end that life
Which without horror I cannot preſerve.

ASSELI.

Ah! what do you reſolve?

IDAME.

When angry Heav'n
Has fill'd the meaſure of our miſeries,
It oft ſupports us in the blackeſt grief,
And gives us courage equal to our woes.
Amid the horrors of the preſent hour

I feel my ſoul dilate with unknown ſtrength;
I fear no more this conqu'ror of mankind;
But on myſelf alone my fate depends.

ASSELI.

But then this ſon, this object of your fears,
Will you abandon him?

IDAME.

Ah! there you touch
My tendereſt part, you pierce me to the ſoul.
O horrid ſacrifice! does ought remain
That can be done to ſave him from deſtruction?
Perhaps the tyrant, proud in his ſucceſs,
By Kings encircled humbled to the duſt,
Amid the crowd of wretches in his train,
Will not reflect on my unhappy child:
Or ſee perhaps with aſpect leſs ſevere
The guiltleſs child, whoſe mother once he lov'd.
In that one hope I reſt; the ſoothing thought
Flatters my ſoul in death. If me he lov'd,
He will not hate my aſhes; when I'm dead,
He'll not purſue my ſon.

SCENE II.

ZAMTI, ASSELI, OCTAR.

OCTAR.

Stay, IDAME;
Here wait the Emperor. [*To his train.*] Guards, watch thoſe infants;
See, that none enter here, none hence depart.
Do, you retire. [*To* ASSELI.

IDAME.

Will the Emperor
See me again? I muſt obey; yet wiſh

That

That with my huſband I might firſt confer.
Perhaps the conqueror, his rage appeas'd,
Will render juſtice to a hapleſs pair.
Alas! I ſee that my requeſt is vain,
And conqueſt is with you inexorable.
Is then compaſſion in your climes unknown?
And may I not your friendly voice implore?

OCTAR.

When th' Emperor has ſpoke, to implore's a crime.
You are not now beneath your ancient kings,
Who could abate the rigour of their laws:
The ſword reigns now; nor pray'rs, nor tears we know.
He ſpeaks, and all earth trembles and obeys.
Stay, and attend the order of the Emperor.

SCENE III.

IDAME, *ſola.*

GOD of the wretched! who behold'ſt my woes,
Amid theſe horrors O ſupport my ſoul!
O give me firmneſs! pour into my boſom
The virtues of the huſband you have giv'n me!

SCENE IV.

GENGIS, IDAME.

GENGIS.

No, I have not enough diſplay'd my rage,
Enough made humble your raſh haughtineſs,
Enough reproach'd the baſeneſs of that heart,
Which anſwers mercy with ingratitude.
You do not ſee the height of your offending,

Nor

Nor think on what a dreadful point you ſtand,
Nor know the horror that inſpires my breaſt:
You, whom I've madly lov'd, but ought to hate;
You, who've betray'd me, and I ought to puniſh?

IDAME.

Puniſh me: but, O puniſh me alone!
The only boon I aſk of my deſtroyer,
Whoſe flinty heart, nor pray'rs, nor tears can melt.
Ah, quench your rage and fierceneſs in my blood!
Deſtroy a woman faithful to her duty;
And let her torments end.

GENGIS.

Ah! no, I cannot.
Too cruel IDAME! O could I end
The tortures more ſevere that rack my ſoul!
I came to puniſh; and can pardon all.
Pardon!——I pardon you!——no, fear my vengeance.
Your Monarch's Son, and you'rs are in my power.
I mention not that abject ſlave your huſband,
Your love is cauſe enough that he ſhould die.
He has betray'd me, brav'd me, been a rebel,
And merited ten thouſand deaths. Your pray'rs
Have ſtay'd that arm, that ſhould fall heavy on him.
Ev'n to this hour the traitor lives. But now
No more will I implore my ſlave, my captive.
Forget him, or he dies. Your ſtubborn heart
Has now no mean pretext to ſcreen its purpoſe:
He is no more your huſband, now condemn'd.
He'll die for you; for ever break the chain
That binds him to you, by a ſhameful death.
'Tis you conſtrain me: you, that faithful wife,
With idle ſcruples ſeal your huſband's death.
I know, I might, all-cover'd with his blood,
Force you ſubmit, and grant my utmoſt wiſh.

But know this Savage, *Scythian*, this Deſtroyer,
Has ſentiments as noble as your own.
Fate, IDAME, deſigns us for each other,
And my ſoul longs for gentle ſway o'er thine.
Abjure your marriage; and that very hour
Your ſon ſhall rank as mine. On your decree
The deſtiny of more than one depends:
Of your King's Son, now doom'd full ſoon to die,
And of your huſband, whom your voice may ſave.
His ſon's fate, your's, nay mine itſelf, on you
Depends; for GENGIS loves you, doats upon you.
And yet beware that you oppoſe me not,
Inſult not the fond weakneſs of my ſoul,
For even now rage chides my tenderneſs,
And threatens danger, while I talk of love.
Tremble at my love, my very kindneſs fear.
My ſoul is too familiar with revenge,
And I ſhall puniſh you, becauſe I've lov'd.
Forgive me; for I rave, and then, alas!
I threaten moſt, when moſt I would implore.
O, ſoothe to peace this conflict of my ſoul!
One word from you this Empire's fate decrees,
But this important word you muſt pronounce.
O, quick pronounce it! and inform my heart,
If it muſt burn with love, or hatred tow'rds you.

IDAME.

Nor love nor hatred ſhould inflame it now.
Your love's unworthy both of you and me:
You owe me juſtice: if you are a King,
I will demand it, ev'n againſt yourſelf.
I do not mean to brave your ſov'reign pow'r,
But rather grace and dignify your greatneſs,
And you in ſecret muſt applaud me for it.

GENGIS.

GENGIS.

'Tis well: you chuſe my hate then: and ſhall have it.
My boſom pants already for revenge.
I know you not; and my juſt indignation
Awakes the cruelty that ſlept within me.
Your Prince, your huſband, and your infant ſon,
Shall anſwer with their blood your rebel ſcorn.
GENGIS condemns, but IDAME is the cauſe.

IDAME.

Barbarian!

GENGIS.

'Tis reſolv'd; they are no more.
Your ſometime Lover's now an angry Maſter:
A bloody, mercileſs, fierce enemy,
Whoſe hatred riſes equal to your ſcorn.

IDAME.

I fall then at this angry Maſter's feet,
Whom Heav'n has made my King; and on my knees
Implore him to comply with one requeſt.

GENGIS.

Cruel! riſe IDAME: I'm all attention.
O! could I tell my ſoul you would relent!
What would you? ſpeak.

IDAME.

That GENGIS would permit
My huſband to confer with me in ſecret.

GENGIS.

Your huſband to confer——

IDAME.

Deny me not:
This conference ſhall be our laſt; that o'er,
You better ſhall interpret my reſiſtance.

GENGIS.

No, 'twere not meet you ſhould conſult with him:

Yet I'll permit this interview. Perhaps
His haughty ſoul hath better learnt its duty,
And taught him to forego the fatal honour
Of rivalling the Conqu'ror of mankind.
He hid his Prince, when I in fury ſought him;
He has poſſeſs'd my IDAME. What crimes!
And yet he lives, is pardon'd, if you aſk it.
You fix his fate; his death, or his divorce.
Yes, he ſhall ſee you. OCTAR, watch this gate.
Alas! what doubts perplex my tortur'd ſoul!
O! ſhall I yet be happy in her love?

IDAME *ſola.*

I feel new ſpirit glow within my breaſt,
That conſtancy I doubted of till now.

SCENE V.

ZAMTI, IDAME.

IDAME.

O thou, whom next to Heaven I revere,
Mortal more great and noble in my eyes,
Than all the Conqu'rors, men have rais'd to Gods;
The horror of our fate too well you know:
Our doom is fixt, and our laſt hour is come.

ZAMTI.

I know it.

IDAME.

Twice you've try'd with vain attempt
To ſave the offſpring of our hapleſs Kings.

ZAMTI.

Ah! think of it no more; all hope is loſt.
Fail not in the performance of your duty,
I die in peace.

IDAME.

IDAME.

What fate attends my ſon?
Forgive this thought, that flows from my deſpair;
Forgive my ſighs, and think but of my courage.

ZAMTI.

Our Kings are dead, our Country is enſlav'd.
To die, is happineſs: lament not me,
But, O bewail the wretches doom'd to live.

IDAME.

They mean you, ZAMTI, a moſt ſhameful death.

ZAMTI.

Well, let it come. I wait their ſavage orders.
They dally with my miſeries too long.

IDAME.

Attend me, ZAMTI. Cannot we then die
Without a tyrant's order? At the altar
The ox is ſacrific'd; the criminal,
Like a vile ſlave, is dragg'd to puniſhment;
But the great, ZAMTI, their own fate determine,
Nor from a haughty maſter wait their death.
Why, why attend the hour of death from him?
Man was not born for ſuch a baſe dependance.
No, copy rather the brave conſtancy
Of our intrepid neighbours. They ſupport
The rights of nature, live while free, but die
Rather than ſuffer ſlav'ry or diſhonour.
To live diſgrac'd is bitter to their ſouls,
Nor dread they ought ſo much as infamy.
The noble *Japoneſe* ne'er meanly waits
A haughty Ruler's voice to ſpeak his death.
We have inſtructed thoſe brave Iſlanders,
Nor let us bluſh to learn their virtues too;
To learn like them to die.

ZAMTI.

O matchleſs woman!
I praiſe thy conſtancy, and ſure ſuch woes
May warrant this tranſgreſſion of our Laws.
I had already form'd this noble purpoſe;
But without arms, ſlaves, victims, and alone,
There are no means of death but from our Tyrants.

IDAME, *drawing a dagger.*

Slaves! victims!—There—take this—with me be free;
Strike and deliver us.

ZAMTI.

O Heaven! with thee?

IDAME.

Yes, tear this breaſt, this heart they would diſhonour.
My feeble arm, ſtill traitor to its purpoſe,
Could not with ſteady aim direct the blow.
Do thou with nobler firmneſs guide its point,
And bravely ſacrifice a faithful wife;
Then, cover'd with her blood, beſide her fall.
In my laſt moments I'll embrace my huſband,
And GENGIS ſhall with jealouſy behold us.

ZAMTI.

Yes, IDAME, thy virtues ſtand the trial,
And thou diſplay'ſt the warmeſt marks of love.
Thrice-worthy wife, this laſt farewel receive——
The dagger now,—— and turn thine eyes aſide.

IDAME, *giving him the dagger.*

There——now ſtrike here: nay, pauſe not, nor delay.

ZAMTI.

I cannot do't.

IDAME.

You muſt.

ZAMTI.

ZAMTI.

O horror!

IDAME.

Strike:

Strike here, then turn the poniard on yourſelf.

ZAMTI.

Then copy me.

IDAME, *ſeizing his arm.*

Here, ZAMTI, here——

SCENE VI.

GENGIS, OCTAR, IDAME, ZAMTI, *Guards.*

GENGIS.

[*Accompanied by his Guards, and diſarming* ZAMTI.]

Hold, hold!

Stay your raſh hand! O Heav'n! what would you do?

IDAME.

Deliver ourſelves from thee, and end our woes.

ZAMTI.

Will you not let us even die in peace?

GENGIS.

O hold!——All-gracious Heaven, King of Kings!
To whom my ſoul now lifts itſelf in pray'r,
Witneſs of all my wrongs, and all my weakneſs,
By whom ſuch States and Monarchs I've ſubdued,
Shall I at length grow worthy of my glory?——
You move my anger, ZAMTI, thus to reign
Over a heart that once felt love for me,
A heart that I adore. Your faithful wife
Had rather fall a ſacrifice to duty,
Fall by thy hand, than ſhare a throne with me.

But you ſhall both endure and own my pow'r,
Perhaps do more.

IDAME.

What more can vengeance do?

ZAMTI.

What new device to add to our afflictions?

IDAME.

Why are we not already doom'd to die?

GENGIS.

Your doom is fix'd, and you ſhall know your fate.
You have done juſtice, I'll do juſtice too.
What I have now beheld I ſcarce believe:
Your firmneſs I admire, and am your convert.
Upon the throne to which my arms have rais'd me,
I bluſh to ſee, how much I fall below you.
In vain by my exploits in war diſtinguiſh'd,
I am degraded; and would equal you.
I knew not, the beſt conqueſt man could make
Was to ſubdue himſelf: to you I owe it.
Rejoice with me that you could change my ſoul,
I come to re-unite, and to protect you.
Watch, happy huſband, o'er the guiltleſs life
Of your King's Son: to your care I reſign him.
By right of conqueſt I might have deſtroy'd him,
But I lay down that right I late abus'd.
With all a father's care I'll henceforth guard
The ORPHAN and your Son. Fear not my faith.
I was but Conqueror, you have made me King.

[*To* ZAMTI.

Of the Laws here, be thou th' interpreter;
With miniſtry right-worthy of thyſelf.
Teach reaſon, juſtice, and morality.
The victors let the vanquiſh'd rule! let wiſdom

Preſide

Preſide o'er courage! triumph o'er rude force,
That owes you homage! I will give th' example.
Your Sov'reign, all invincible in arms,
Shall own himſelf obedient to your Laws.

IDAME.

What do I hear? O Heav'n! can this be true?

ZAMTI.

Now, you indeed are worthy of your glory;
Nor ſhall your captives groan beneath your yoke.

IDAME.

What could inſpire ſo noble a deſign?

GENGIS.

YOUR VIRTUES. Theſe to friendſhip turn'd my hate,
And taught me, TO BE GOOD, IS TO BE GREAT.

The END.

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——*Non de Villis Domibuſve alienis*
Nec male necne Lepos ſaltet; ſed quod magis ad nos
Pertinet & neſcire malum eſt, agitamus—— HOR.

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